

Sex Tyranny

By Josephine K. Henry

A clear cut note containing practical suggestions was struck by Walter Hurt in the Blade of November 23rd. Whenever Mr. Hurt pushes his pen he says something worth pondering, and he knows how to say it.

Speaking of the work of Liberals Mr. Hurt says:

"It does seem time they should tire of carelessly casting stones at Jehovah, and for an interval turn their attention to things more immediate, to wrongs that cry insistently the urgent need for reform."

"To my sense of justice no form of oppression equals that of sex tyranny. Yet it has the sanction of law, and the forcible support of organized authority."

These words of Walter Hurt ring with truth, and should arouse a resolve among Freethinkers everywhere to the practical work of attacking this most brutal of all tyrannies, and paralyzing it, by exposing it in such a manner that public sentiment will overpower it. Many forms of sex tyranny can be found in every community, and among all classes of people. It is of all degrees from the requirements of the self-conscience "head of the family" to the brute that manages his wife with the bullet, the bludgeon, and the knife. There are millions of crushed and cowed women who are the victims of a refined type of cruelty, who do not dare express an opinion for fear it will antagonize the opinions of their lords, who make their families understand they are infallible in wisdom and judgment though the world estimates them at their proper worth, as possessing neither one. There are men, who, if they are nonentities in the outside world, cater to their vanity by compelling women in their power to slavishly obey their commands, accept their ideas, and shape their lives according to their commands, and strange to say, large classes of women submit to all these indignities when they are keenly conscious of their own mental and moral superiority to the men who rule them. This disposition to tyrannize over women has its tap root in Bible teaching, and a man does not live up to his Christian privileges unless he is a domestic tyrant. The man who has the most Bible religion is the greatest tyrant. The slavish subservience of the wives of self-important ecclesiastics, of holier-than-thou preachers, attest this fact, and over-pious deacons, elders and laymen, have crushed and broken hearts of women, wrecked their lives, and put them under the rod. Yet the average tyrant thinks he is a model husband, and the average woman is taught by her religious teachers to suffer her wrongs in silence, and the more wrongs she endures, the better Christian she is.

Sex tyranny prevails to a greater or less degree in all the relations of family life. The husband rules the wife, brothers constitute themselves censors over the morals of sisters, though they possess only bad morals themselves. If the father dies, the sons subordinate the mother and sisters, and become the manipulators of their families, acting on the general idea that men alone are financiers. Thousands of families have been reduced to poverty because women have not been allowed to exercise their judgment in financial matters. Sex tyranny is exercised in a countless number of ways regarding finances, and millions of women have been wronged and robbed of their rightful inheritance by this diabolism.

Men exercise perfect liberty of action in going and coming when and where they please. To question their right in this regard although they bring up at the saloon or the brothel thus wrecking the happiness of their families is considered an infringement on their human rights.

Women, if they desire to leave home for any purpose, are expected to gain the permission of the men of the family, regarding length of absence, finances, etc.

Volumes could be filled with the exposition of sex tyranny from its most revolting phase to forms so petty that neither the men who exercise them, nor the women who suffer them, realize their diabolism, so engrained are they into the warp and woof of our social system.

The sex tyranny that takes on the ferocity of the wild beast is daily recorded in the press. Mr. Hurst in his article cites the case of "The Covington, Ky., man who abused his wife with unusual cruelty, and drove her from home with a pistol. She obtained employment in Cincinnati. Her husband learned of her whereabouts and asked the police to arrest her. A policeman accompanied him to the fugitive's room. There the sight of the wife threw the husband into a violent temper, and before a word had been spoken he attempted to seize her by the throat. She tried to defend herself with a heavy whip, but the policeman disarmed her. The pair were then taken to police headquarters. There the woman refused to have anything further to do with her husband. She was given the alternative of going with him or being locked up.

The above is but one phase of sex tyranny. Think of a woman being in the power of two such brutes, one of them her husband, and the other an officer of the law, both imbued with the idea that a wife belongs to her husband and is subject to his commands. Negro women during slavery in the South were not more abject or outraged slaves than this woman, who because she is a woman, is denied any voice in the marital laws that outrage her person and human rights, or the civil law that hunts her as a criminal, and deprives her of her liberty. The above case is not an isolated one. They are occurring in every community, and not more

than a small per cent of them ever come to public notice.

Right here in my own county of Woodford, a case of blood-curdling barbarity has recently taken place. The Versailles paper gives the following facts in the case:

George Honaker Gets a Life Term.

The jury in the case of Common-wealth vs. George Honaker, for maliciously striking and wounding his wife, Josie Honaker, with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, and also charged with two former convictions for felony, on Friday afternoon returned a verdict of guilty and fixed Honaker's punishment at life imprisonment in the penitentiary.

Honaker's crime against his wife, as shown by the evidence, was frightfully brutal.

Last May Mrs. Honaker, on account of her husband's cruelty to her and threats to take her life, left her home near Seller's Mill and rode horseback to Versailles to go to her mother at Paris. Honaker followed her and overtook her at the Southern depot and by tender promises of complete reformation on his part persuaded her to accompany him home. When they had gotten away from town he whipped their horses into a mad pace and then with curses and abuse lashed his wife with a rope bridle all the way to Seller's Mill. Several times the woman was knocked from her horse and bruised and lacerated. On the threshold of their home Honaker, with oaths and threats, knocked his wife down twice with a locust bludgeon. Honaker and his wife were married four years ago in Bourbon county and came to Woodford two years ago. They have one child.

A motion for a new trial for Honaker was overruled. An appeal will be taken.

This horrible crime against a defenseless woman only receives this short notice recording the proceedings of a Circuit Court in the town paper. The brutal husband got his just deserts, but in largely the majority of such cases the offender goes free.

The public conscience is not aroused against such crimes, because it has grown callous on account of their frequency. There are nine churches in my town of Versailles, supported and attended chiefly by women, yet not one word of protest has ever been uttered in one of them against this atrocity, against a defenseless woman, yet anathemas are constantly hurled against a band of savage Jews whom it is preached crucified (a mythical) Christ two thousand years ago.

We hear of neuter sermons from pulpits, nor charges from judges to grand juries demanding the rooting out of injustice and crimes against women.

Where is the preacher who will dare enter his pulpit with the Holy Bible

in his hand, and demand justice for women in the church, the State, or the family? Where is the judge that will dare charge a grand jury to hunt out the wrongs against women in our social system, or demand that they be allowed a voice in the laws that tax them to pay the wages of judges, or jurors, or demand that woman when on trial for life or liberty be allowed a jury of their peers?

The preacher dare not do it because his Bible commands the subjection of woman, and the judge dare not do it because his position depends upon the votes of men, who, whether they know it or not are the victims of religious and political tyranny and superstition. Women have no voices, therefore they can be wronged and robbed without danger of unroofing the priest, or disrobing the jurist. No man is good enough, or wise enough to rule a woman. Each individual of either sex has enough to do to rule herself or himself.

The Bible says: "He that ruleth himself is greater than he that taketh a city." Yet it emphasizes the subjection of woman to man, when it says "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church."

Sex tyranny sends its deadly virus through every vein of our social system. Woman under all systems of religion and government has been the victim of sex tyranny, from the Roman law giving the husband absolute power of life and death over the wife, to the pampered wife of the rich American, who is never trusted with a dollar in cash, but is required to exploit her husband's credit to supply her needs, because custom says men alone shall hold the purse.

The "head of the household" theory has well nigh turned the domestic system into a Pandemonium. But I may be asked are there no women tyrants? I answer numbers of them, but numerous as they are, the great wonder is, that there are not more. The ruling power does not reside wholly in the male, nor wholly in the female. Consequently woman as man, with the same human nature as man, makes a ceaseless struggle to release herself from the sex to secure freedom and equality. The ruler types of women ignore their sworn pledges of marital obedience to a male head, and go into the ruling business themselves, riding rough shod over the wishes or commands of their yoke fellow, if he happens to be of the non-giving type, or keeping up a state of civil war if he be insubordinate. A more peace loving female born-ruler, of necessity resorts to one of many lives of policy. She may rule by keeping her subjects so well fed, entertained and comfortable, that she rules him without his knowledge.

The deceitful woman of the ruling class resorts to the administration of double-distilled doses of flattery, secrecy as to her plans and actions and falsehood if she be detected. It is asserted that women are more

deceitful than men. It may be that women practice more deceit than men, not because they are by nature more deceptive, but because laws and customs of society, and of church and State have always trampled on their human rights, and made them the victims of sex tyranny of every form.

A class in bondage whether they be women or men, always practice deceit and strategy, to protect or wrest their human rights from a ruling class. Falsehood and deceit have no sex. The Bible does not have a very high opinion of either women or men, for it says woman is the cause of all the evil in the world, and Psalms says "put not your trust in men or princes" and that "all men are liars." I never could unreservedly accept this text in Holy Writ. It seems to me it should have said: "Nearly all men and women are liars, with some doubt about the veracity of the rest."

No stronger proof is needed to establish the fact that women are the victims of sex tyranny than this. A man was never heard to express the wish that he were a woman, for the reason that the human rights and liberties of women, even the ownership of their bodies, are denied to them in Christian civilization, while millions of women rebelling against their enslaved position, have wished they were men, and for no reason, but that men have more liberty than women.

The most unjust type of sex tyranny is the double code of morals. This is general. The woman with even a suspicion against her chastity is a social outcast with a red letter branded on her forehead, while a man steeped in moral leprosy is a toast in social and political circles and has the audacity to demand that his wife and female relatives be "as pure as ice and chaste as snow." Lord Brougham spoke the truth when he said: "Wherever the canon or civil law touches woman it degrades her."

These have been the canker at the heart of civilization. Every cruelty and injustice that has been paralyzed through the ages, has been done through the influence of freethought. What matters it to a steering wheel what the barbarians of Bible times did or said? Better would it have been for humanity if their cruelties had never been recorded. Sex tyranny is a curse to the human race, and Freethinkers can do no more practical work than to expend heroic effort to eradicate it root and branch out of theology, civil laws, and social customs. When the faith of woman is weakened and her reason aroused, she will not be content with the presentation of a masculine God, or the demands of masculine priests, or rulers.

All self-respecting women should be in the vanguard of self-assertion. Sex tyranny makes our social problems insoluble. Rooting out every type of it will recast the religious, economic, and social organism. It will reinstate the fundamental law of interdependence, equality, and comradeship between men and women and establish justice and liberty. The power of freethought has practically destroyed chattel slavery. Its practical work today is the destruction of every form of sex tyranny.

Versailles, Ky.

DUSTMAN COMES DOWN WITH THE DUST

Berlin Center, Ohio, May 26, 1903. Blue Grass Blade, Lexington, Ky.: Dear Sirs—Find enclosed money order for five dollars for which please forward by return mail to my address of those subscription cards for the Blue Grass Blade. Hurry them forward as soon as possible, as I have taken several subscriptions for the Blade. I have only been a reader of the Blade for three months, and I like it very much. It is dead easy to get subscriptions for the Blade; all you have to do, is to show them the paper, tell them about the subscription cards and they go down in their pockets at once for the half dollar.

There is no reason why the Blade should not have a circulation of 100,000 in a short time. Let every reader of the Blade wake up and go to work at once by sending for five dollars worth of subscription cards. Certainly every reader of the Blue Grass Blade has enough pride about them to help give the Blade a good big and lively circulation. Please mark me down for one of Charles C. Moore's Dog Fennels. C. M. DUSTMAN.

Comment—I have always believed that that is just what could easily be done. His name is Dustman and he comes down with the dust, and that is what friends of the Blade must do. Christians talk a great deal about the power of prayer and a lot of rot of that kind, but when they want to make their religion go they put up their money. Just the same we have about infidel propaganda. We have got to fight the devil with fire—meet Christian dollars with infidel dollars, and infidels begin to strengthen when, and only when, all parties see that we are going to back our views by our money.

Bro. Dustman's letter head shows that he is a manufacturer of stone ware and probably is in a fine business. There are people like that all over America who believe as the Blade does and they are increasing all the time. Let such be sought out by our friends and gain their influence for the Blade and the possibilities of this paper are incalculable.

We Can't Tell Your Fortune, but we have publications that will enlighten you about Texas and its great possibilities. Other "Katy" publications, "The Golden Square," "The Coming Country," "Old Mexico," etc., will be mailed on application. Address 510 Wainwright Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

The Earth and the Man. have close relations and "Farming in the Great Southwest" is a true exponent. Write for copy of this and other publications bearing on prospects for money-making on the line of the M. K. & T. Ry. Address, "KATY," 511 Wainwright Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

MISS L. M. GIBSON

Of the Blade Club, Replies to Mrs. Henry's Request.

112 Post ave., St. Elmo, Tenn., May 28, 1903.

Editor Charles C. Moore: Dear Friend—I have seen in the Blade, Mrs. Henry's kind request that I shall be one of four to write articles for next week's Blade. I am a nurse and have only been at home once since the N. L. P. Congress. My Blade had not come and I borrowed one to read while I was on the cars to answer a call, and among the first things that I saw was that I was expected to write something for the Blade.

My time is all taken up, but I do not like to say "I can't."

There are several things needed that are not mentioned by our writers. One is dress reform, from infancy to old age. Infants are dressed almost to death. If they escape the dressing and dosing and reach their "teens," the female half are all put on French heels, in stays and under millinery. They must also wear a "chocker" collar. The ills caused by such follies become local and the half, that are satisfied with the ills they have, eke out a sort of nervous existence that they call "having a good time" until they are called upon to become mothers, then they bear, he rolyally, all the pain caused by this foolish form of dress and unhygienic living, and go into a fit of hysterics over an unexpected sound or the sight of a mouse.

The other half dissatisfied with the ills they have fly to those they know not of and add to the above list trains, low-neck and no-sleeves. I can not describe the sufferings that I see in this combination, and I ask that some one give us a more sensible style of dress.

I think I can design a simple and comfortable costume for the infant, and the grammar; will some one give us some for maids and matrons.

Since beginning this I have had to lay it down a hundred times, and offer this as my apology for not writing.

I take this occasion to send the dollar for the Blade I ordered to my mother.

I am all impatient to read "Dog Fennel." Did you bring all of those souvenirs? If so, break Capt. Burn's in two. He is my oldest friend made when I can first remember, and I am sure he won't mind it since it is for me—conceit for you.

I want Dr. Wilson's poems when they are published.

With best wishes and love, I am your real friend,

MISS L. M. GIBSON.

THE DOLLAR.

Hits the Bull's Eye—"Money Talks."

Los Angeles, Cal., June 1, 1903.

Mr. James E. Hughes: Enclosed is 50 cents for extra papers of the Atheistic number and \$1.00 for the Blade.

Will you kindly find the man to do the business, and let me know if I don't take it in hand it will not be done. I liked your plan as proposed with regard to the cards and I will say this if you will mail me five cards or ten, I will try to dispose of them as soon as I can. Think I can get ten, but in a reasonable time, if I do not dispose of all I will return those not sold and remit you the balance due. I do not ask any commission or premium, only I don't wish to advance you the money nor run any risk of paying more than 50 cents a year if I cannot secure the full number of five subscribers. I think I can get twelve, five and postage and money for order fees and then insure the full number. I will make those who are in arrears date back or else pay.

J. K. P. BAKER.

Comment—Yes, we are willing to do that—willing and glad to do so in some rare instances where mere negligence or indifference of people, but in the large majority of cases all such propositions are made in good faith and in many instances they will be observed all the more punctiliously by those we trust, just from the fact that we do trust them.

We want to show our faith in the integrity of our people by showing our confidence in them, in a case like this there is no risk except from accident or oversight, as the party is a tried and approved and known friend of the Blade, but we are willing to do this in cases where we do not know the parties well. Give us a trial and do by us as you would have us to do by you.

When I started the Blue Grass Blade in 1884, it was regarded in the South that infidelity was one of the Northern issues that are advocated by long-haired men and short-haired women—I had never heard of Brother Shaw's Independent Pulpit then—but my town, Lexington, Ky., spoke for the whole South, when it said it would be damned if it would let an infidel paper start here. So it started with personal assaults of me and insults and threats on the streets made by Christians that they would kill me, and a public meeting, in the Court house in Lexington, represented by the pulpit and the saloon, all working like hand and glove together and all of this cheered and supported by editors and papers of that day in Lexington and that are now obsolete. Then they tried imprisonment, beginning with putting me in jail and then in the penitentiary, and I now, even at this day, have a second penitentiary conviction on the books of the United States Court against me, and it gives me so little uneasiness that I could not tell, now, which of several cases against me it was that I was convicted on.

I have completely triumphed over

all of my enemies, and all of them have been seen by the world, to be just what I said they were, and death and drunkenness and oblivion have removed them from public attention, and, today, when I have returned from the Orient, to which I have gone to further fit myself for efficiency in combating the influence of people of that kind, no man has been more cordially welcomed home than I have been by good people of all kinds, Christians and Infidels, and the Lexington Leader, by far the most influential paper that Lexington ever had, or seems likely to have, is my cordial friend in every thing that I undertake, though that paper is owned and edited by the son of a Presbyterian preacher who, as United States Revenue Collector, has charge of the whisky interests of this State, and the preachers and the whisky men have been combined as my enemies.

It is certainly true that Infidels can only enjoy the rights that the Constitution of this government grants them because infidel papers are here to defend those rights, and if these infidel papers were all today, all over the United States, to fail at once, for the want of support, Christian fanatics would run riot over the liberties of this country. Remember that only a few years ago, a Methodist preacher in Lexington, imported here to preach a few years, a man who told me that he owed \$95,000, had me put in jail in Lexington, for blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—no charge that I had violated the rights of any human being, but that I did not believe as he did, and because all ghosts look alike to me.

Certainly it is your duty to stand by Mr. Hughes with your money, not merely your words; for words don't go as collateral in our banks and groceries and for newspaper supplies, and see that he can keep up this work that he has so faithfully done, and with such meager compensation, until any infidel anywhere in the United States, shall have just as much right to express his opinion as any Christian has.

Learn to make some sacrifice for our cause. Spread Blades at 50 cents a year on the club plan. I don't ask you to give him one cent. I simply ask you to pay him, in this way, 50 cents a year for as good an infidel paper as was ever printed.

ANY PORT IN A STORM.

Harlan, Iowa, May 16, 1903.

Mr. James E. Hughes, Lexington, Ky.: Dear Comrade—it was I who secured the first Harlan club for the Blade, and it consisted of eleven subscribers. When the time expired some of our club asked me to renew their subscription; but I did not know then that I could get the old club rates, besides some of the subscribers have to be solicited and some did not wish the paper any longer, and altogether I did not wish to deprive others of the fun (?) of getting up a club. So I gave my 50 cents to another and told him to get up the club, which he did, but got only five subscribers. Now, for some time I think the club is in arrears and though a few are members the club continued to languish. I cannot find the man to do the business, and I suppose that if I don't take it in hand it will not be done. I liked your plan as proposed with regard to the cards and I will say this if you will mail me five cards or ten, I will try to dispose of them as soon as I can. Think I can get ten, but in a reasonable time, if I do not dispose of all I will return those not sold and remit you the balance due. I do not ask any commission or premium, only I don't wish to advance you the money nor run any risk of paying more than 50 cents a year if I cannot secure the full number of five subscribers. I think I can get twelve, five and postage and money for order fees and then insure the full number. I will make those who are in arrears date back or else pay.

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I have completely triumphed over

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IS FOR THE BLADE

AND DOG FENNEL.

Idana, Kansas, May 14, 1903.

Mr. Charles C. Moore: Brother Heathen and Editor of the Blue Grass Blade:

I am called a heathen by the ghost worshippers because I take the Blade and read it. The Blade is worth more to me than the Bible is. The Blade is for humanity and freedom and liberty and the Bible is not. The Bible upholds priestcraft and superstition. I believe in the God of nature. All things are natural, but the orthodox Christian God and Saviour Jesus Christ I think are myths.

I wish through the columns of the Blade to send my thanks to the Liberal brother who sent me the books, the Age of Reason and Facts Worth Knowing. I will use them for missionary work.

I am in arrears on my subscription to the Blade. I send the money with this article. I hope it will be received by the Blade. I received by me. I wish you a long and happy life, and that you may do much good in this world while you live.

When you are ready to send me your book Dog Fennel in the Orient, the dollar is saved to send you.

Fraternally Yours,

THOMAS DUELL.

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